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FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: PRIORITY ITEM: PROMOTING SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION OF ALL PEOPLE, INCLUDING DISADVANTAGED AND VULNERABLE GROUPS AND PERSONS

Letter dated 3 February 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Commission for Social Development

In your capacity as Chairman of the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-sixth session, we should like to ask you to have the attached text, entitled "A draft declaration of interdependence" (see annex), circulated as an official document of the Commission for Social Development.

(Signed) Cristina AGUIAR
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-02971 (E) 100298 100298

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ANNEX

A draft declaration of interdependence

Recognizing that a structure is only as strong as its foundations, we the members of the United Nations reaffirm and reiterate our founding principles in the light of 50 years of experience.

In the Charter, the peoples of the United Nations pledge to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite their strength to maintain international peace and security. To that end, the Charter states that the purposes of the United Nations include "encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

These noble objectives have guided our work and the world is a better place because of the many programmes to which they have given rise. We believe that it can be made even better if we continue our work, enlightened by what we have learned over the years.

The world has become much more interdependent than it was in 1945. Inventions and discoveries, especially in the area of transport and communications, have shrunk our world while multiplying the ties that bind human beings together. We have seen images of our Earth from the vastness of outer space and these images have confirmed the oneness of all human beings on our planet. Ours is a single, interconnected world and we must make our way in it.

Just as there are ties that bind peoples internationally, so there are ties that bind us all within society. These ties are ties of interconnectedness and interdependence. To preserve and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as universal participation in the functioning of society, social programmes must take these essential truths into account.

We affirm that human relations are characterized by interdependence. They are organic, two-way, reciprocal; they are based on giving and receiving, on the rights and obligations of each in relation to all. We are not members of isolated groups, of fragmented, independent worlds; we are part of a unified whole. Where this is not recognized, where social interaction takes the form of power and hierarchy on one side and powerlessness and passive dependence on the other, even with the best of intentions, human relations are distorted.

We therefore resolve that, henceforth, all programmes and policies of the United Nations will be formulated with these truths in mind and will reflect the spirit of social reciprocity inherent in them.